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AN
ANTIDOTE:

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OR, SOME
REMARKS
UPON A

TREATISE ON MERCURY.

Endeavouring to shew that the Danger therein
Asserted of taking it Crude is not supported by
Facts, or by Reason; and that in treating pro-
miscuously of Mercury Crude, and its various
Preparations, all the Evil Consequences which
often attend it when prepared are assigned to the
Crude, in order to alarm Peoples Fears, and deter
them from this innocent and very efficacious Prac-
tice.

Earnestly recommended to the Perusal of all Chronic Pa-
tients who know they can have no other Help.

By once their Fellow-Sufferer, and a long Experienced
Patient of many Physicians, but now a happy
Practitioner upon himself.

A JOVE MERCURIUS.

LONDON,

Printed: And Sold by J. ROBERTS in Warwick-
Lane. 1732.

[Price Six Pence.]

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PREFACE.

THE *Virtues of Mercury, experienced in the long Practice of Dr. Dover our Countryman, and Bel-loste a Foreigner, and by them deservedly extolled, have reached the Publick's Notice, and gain'd their Approbation in so high a Degree, that perhaps ten thousand People have of late daily taken it crude; of these great Numbers from being before miserable are become happy; some even have been so hardy as by the Use of it to outlive their Doctor's Sentence of Death, and perhaps the Doctor himself. This general Use of what was before forbidden Fruit raises the Jealousy of those who would always lock it up among their Arcana: Some body therefore must be employ'd with the Authoritative Character of a Doctor to*

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puzzle and terrify the World, and gravely in Learned Harangues to condemn it as an injurious Practice, such it may prove to them perhaps, but not to the Afflicted.

The Author of a Treatise on Mercury is the first Champion sending forth his Menaces: He may probably be surpris'd, and not well pleased to find so unequal an Antagonist, not one of the Faculty, but a renegade Patient, and look down with great Contempt upon these very loose and cursory Remarks on his Book.

But the Subject being Mercury, as wonderful in its Nature, as in the manner of its operating in humane Bodies, of which 'tis impossible to give a certain account; Doctors or no Doctors are alike, unequal to such an Attempt; and as every one who is not blind distinguishes between Light and Darkness, without being able to describe that Power, he finds in himself; so may I or any one else, without studying Physick,

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sick, by common Experience alone, know what are the usual Effects of Medicines that have been often given. We are therefore alike intitled to quote Cases, and to make reasonable tho' not learned Observations upon them; to which part of his Treatise, it may be thought by many, I should have confin'd myself, and not have followed him into the abstruse scientific Part, a Task I must own unequal to my Abilities.

But despairing of any other Advocate in this Cause, and thinking it very necessary, I have endeavour'd to awaken his Reader's Attention, and to point out some Places where, with that sort of Learning peculiar to the Faculty and little understood by others, he frames imaginary Theories, at best ingenious Guesses, and from thence reasons them into Consequences suited to his Purposes, not binding himself to his declared Subject crude Mercury, but promiscuously treating of the bad Effects of all its Preparations. By such a Method

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thod he plainly discovers his Intentions of restraining People, not as he says in the Title and Conclusion, from an indiscriminate Use of crude Mercury, but from the Use of it in any Case whatever; frequently calling in to his Assistance the Fears of Mankind, which upon such Occasions are commonly too prevalent for Reason; and by this we see there is a Craft in Physick as well as other Trades; the shewing of this was the chief Intent of my Work, and therefore could not well be omitted. The unskilful Manner of executing it will convince the Readers that I am no Doctor, and they will easily perceive, if any thing should look that way, that it is but a random Collection gather'd from my frequent Conversations with Gentlemen of this Profession. I may safely say after him, that I have nothing in View more than the publick Good, for I am quite clear of the Imputation, that may stick to a Physician in such an Affair, either from the fear

of

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of losing Practice, or from an Endeavour to get it. Nothing could carry me so far out of my way but a very strong Notion of an incumbent Duty upon me to make the only grateful Return in my Power to Providence, by endeavouring to lead as many others as I can into the same Course of being made happy; and this will, I hope, procure me a favourable Indulgence.

I cannot conclude this introductory Discourse without bestowing a Remark upon a very extraordinary Paragraph or two in the Preface to the Treatise now under Consideration; where it is said that Bravavolus, Matthiolus, Amatus Lusitanus, Hartmannus, cum multis aliis ending in us, all profess'd Advocates for crude Mercury, were bold enough to recommend it to be given a Scruple at a time, but with several Restrictions; this introduces the Author's Admiration of Dr. Dover's Presumption in recommending it in various Complaints, without any Limitation,

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tion, and for saying he never knew it do any harm.

He has no Authority from the Doctor, to say without any Limitation. Now supposing the Doctor to have experienc'd many wonderful good Effects, and never any bad ones, from swallowing crude Mercury; which is most reasonable? to be guided by such Experience, or by the Opinions of those old Oracles.

To what a miserable State would this Author reduce the Practice of Physic; if he excludes Experience 'tis but buying a Parcel of old Authors, and with such Furniture at Home, with grave Looks, some common Place Fargon, and a great Peruke to hide an empty Head abroad; procuring at the same time a proper Commission to kill and destroy with Impunity, and you set forth in the full Equipage of a Doctor.

T H E



THE
ANTIDOTE:
OR, SOME
REMARKS
Upon a TREATISE ON
MERCURY.



THE Faculty may, as aptly as the Publick, be compared to a great Body with many Heads, where the sudden violent Emotion of the one raises the Attention of all the rest; they immediately stare that way, and snarle at the same time.

This has been verified in every Age, wherein any one has appeared ingenious and honest enough to vary, for the publick

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lick Good, from the common beaten Path. The Author of any new Light must be immediately decry'd, and its time alone will bring forth Truth, and expose Errors.

Witness first Dr. *Harvey's* famous Discovery; his Brethren's Treatment of it, and of him; and their being at last forc'd to give way to a sensible Conviction.

Then the infamous Combination against the Bark upon its first gaining Credit, when something was prepared for the Press to deter People from the Use of it; and the whole College upon Debate, (Dr. *Sydenham*, Dr. *Moreton*, and only four others excepted,) were for declaring it a deleterious Medicine. And its great Efficacy since proved in a very extensive Use.

Another Instance, their expelling a Member of the College about twenty six Years ago, for prescribing a Remedy which is now inserted in the *Dispensary*; and Apothecaries are punishable, if their Shops be not provided with it.

After all this, I say, will they take the Shame of their Predecessors to themselves, by appearing in the same Temper of Mind, and persecuting with their Remarks and Censures the antient Physician for prescribing crude Mercury, and publishing

lishing its wonderful Virtues. What will not the World think of them, for thus decrying a Medicine which has effected hundreds of Cures within these two Years, more than all the other Drugs put together?

Diana of the *Ephesians* will occur to our Minds. The Author in his introductory Part seems to hint, that 'tis meerly in Compliance with a new Fashion that People take Mercury, and wonders that so trifling a Consideration should prevail in an Affair of such Consequence. He cannot surely be serious; I believe, they would tell him, that tired in a long and vain Search for Ease, from the Skilful in the *Materia Medica*, and finding their most sanguine Hopes eternally deluded, and themselves abandon'd to their hard Fate, they could not be so weak, as to be terrify'd with that pusillanimous old Maxim quoted by him, *What can do much good, may also do much harm*; but sought the Good without dreading the Mischiefs, which by this Maxim are unknown and dubious.

The two other Inducements, that of its being an easy Remedy, and the Success others have found from it, tho' by him treated as slight ones, are sufficiently strong to lead a reasonable Person into a

Trial ; even the first will deserve some Consideration, when Quicksilver shall be compared with the nauseous Drenches of rank Oils, Oxymel Scill. and *Assa fœtida*, which makes the Patients extremely offensive to their Friends and Attendants ; but the other, I think, is the strongest that can be urged. What better Rule can the Physicians themselves follow in their Practice ? One Doctor in my Opinion excelling another only by the superior Number of well observed Precedents he has for his Guide. The suffering Patient must be destitute of his Sense of Feeling, or Understanding, or Spirit, who will not seek Relief in an easy Method wherein others before him have found it.

He doubts not his Readers will be convinced, that he has good Reasons for saying, that the present way of taking crude Mercury, is a very dangerous Practice, and advances, as universally allowed, that this Mineral Fluid has been always found hurtful in the nervous System. His Reasons, and the Truth of this Affirmation, will have the fairest Trial by Experience from Cases that have or may occur ; no Supposititious ones, or Guesses under the Character of *Rationales* will be admitted as Evidence ; and in considering the Cases he has quoted, and what may be produced

duced in Opposition to them, this Part will be reply'd to. But here it will not be improper to remark a little upon his Assertion, that the good and bad Qualities of Mercury have been sufficiently discovered by Experience, and by the Fire.

Have the Ages before us, and the present been so very successful in their curious Researches into the Mysteries of Nature, as to leave nothing for Posterity to do, but to qualify themselves to read their Labours, and implicitly to follow in the ways traced out to them.

I may, and do allow him that the present set of practising Physicians of this Town are as learned, and as judicious as any in all *Europe*, and the other three Parts of the Globe too, if he pleases; and yet the Physicians previous to the time of Dr. *Harvey*, I dare say, thought as highly of their own Abilities as the present; tho' they were grovelling in the dark, and miserably ignorant in that essential Part of their Science, the Blood's Motion; and how that useful Discovery, and its Author was treated is well known; the Monster's many Heads stared and snarled.

This one Example should be a Cure for Self-sufficiency, and make even all the Learned and Ingenious think, that many more good Qualities are still discovered

covered in this mysterious Metal. One beneficial Discovery has been lately made, that it cures various Sorts of Asthma's; before this, 'tis plain, something was unknown to the Generality at least; for, whoever prescrib'd it in that Case before Dr. *Dover*? and I fear, too few will submit to follow his Example.

The want of Knowledge in this efficacious Remedy, is very conspicuous from the Practice of those antiquated Authors he quotes, and much more so, if nothing worse, in a very late Instance; a Gentleman, in Vogue undoubtedly equal if not superior to all his Fraternity, declared to his Patient long lingering under his methodical Practice, (please to observe it well in a nervous Case,) that taking of crude Mercury, which he propos'd for his Doctor's Approbation, would be equally rash as shooting himself thro' the Head. The Patient parted with his Doctor, took crude Mercury, and was soon well. 'Tis mention'd here as an Instance only of the Virtues of Mercury being not sufficiently found out; farther notice may be taken of it among the Cases, if the Gentleman, who is very considerable in Figure and Fortune, will permit it to be explain'd.

The

The Author on his first Division upon the Nature of Mercury, amuses the Publick with an ingenious *Essay*. And tho' I profess I don't understand it, I should have thank'd him for the Entertainment, had he not artfully thrown in, that the Sulphur, one of its constituent Parts, renders it highly prejudicial to the Humane Frame, and that Experience sufficiently shews, that it produces arsenical and poisonous Effects; Poisonous was added, I presume, for the Contemplation of such Readers, if there be any such, who do not know Arsenic to be a Poison.

These Effects are no ways concern'd in the present Dispute; to support his Position, he flies to those who inspire the Fumes of it when over the Fire, or in great abundance working in a confined Air in the Mines. If he really thinks, or others after him, that crude Mercury in its natural State is poisonous, let him and his Converts read Dr. *Mead's* Treatise on Poisons, and then be convinced of his Error.

I do not mean by this Reference to have it thought, that an absolute Credit is always to be given to Physicians declared Opinions, whether in print, or in *extempore* Prescriptions, as their real ones. Ingenious Men are often tied down to
Rules

Rules in Practice and Writing, in many Instances too arbitrary for publick Utility. Wherefore I cannot be sure, that the Author I am now perusing, may not be a Swallower of crude Mercury himself, and that others among them, who send Alkalis to their Patients, may not for their own Use prefer Acids. And in this Article I cannot follow him any farther, but tell him only, that as he says the Chymists know not what to make of it, I may reasonably suppose he knows as little himself, and, in applying the following Story, send him back to his Study. A Tutor in one of the Universities reading over to his Pupils some of *Euclid's* Problems and Solutions, made proper Pauses, and ask'd them if they understood it; when the Answer was affirmative, he proceeded; but once upon his young Audiences being puzzled, and answering in the negative, he repeated his Question several times more deliberately, to which the Answer No was constantly return'd; whereupon he began to consider the Thing in his own Mind, which it seems, as a meer Rehearser, he had not done before, found it above his own Conception, and told them he did not then comprehend it himself, dismissing them for farther Instruction the next Day.

His

His next Attempt, that of accounting for the manner of *Mercury* operating in humane Bodies, well deserves that *Exordium, hoc Opus, hic Labor*; how well he has succeeded must be determined by the Learned; I as one of the Illiterate should have been glad that he would first have explain'd something of more common Practice, and therefore supposed to be better known, to have been told the regular Course of a Purge in humane Bodies, or how certain Medicines excite a Sweat, otherwise than by constant Experience of such their Effects: 'Till that is done, may it not with equal Reason be said in a pompous Stile, that they are sent at random into the Body, there to do what Execution Chance shall direct them? Were all Cases to be impartially examined, it would certainly be found, that the black Catalogue of Evils, which by Wholesale he imputes to *Mercury*, might with more justice be charged upon other Medicines wrong applied; which has often happened, and I believe never in the Case of crude *Mercury*, as in his Practice he must have observed vastly different Operations of *Mercury* in its various Preparations, and Manners of giving it: A due Distinction in a Treatise of this Nature should have been

accurately made, if he intended it for Instruction ; for want of which I am at a loss to know, when it is he is talking of crude Mercury, and when of that prepared by Fire; and when 'tis of Crude, whether he means that given by Unction, or by the Mouth; and when 'tis given by the Mouth, whether he means it in its natural State, or broke in a Mortar with other Pouders.

I presume, by his Declaration against its being taken in its natural State and by the Mouth, that he may have dealt in it altogether, either prepared or by Unction: As such a Practitioner he may think himself qualified to give a *Rationale* or Guess, how in that manner applied it shall operate so variously; as when a Salivation is intended, it shall sometimes have its desired Effect by Urine, sometimes by violent Sweatings, and sometimes effectuate the Cure without any visible Operation at all: So wonderful is this *Phenomenon*, that there is no way of accounting for the Author's seeming Attempt to explain it, but on this Supposition, that he takes this Masque the better to cover his artful Design of robbing the World of its good Effects.

The

The Author next says, that crude Mercury in the present Method of taking it, has salivated some few Patients; which I own to be Fact, and say it is the worst Consequence that can attend it; such Salivations have been always found very slight ones, of a few Days Continuance only, insomuch that some of the Patients have been kept in Ignorance of their Case; why then is it set forth in some part of his Book as threatening Fatality? These Terrors are perpetually kept in view, and plainly point out the sole drifts of the Writer. The Consequence he draws from these Salivations is, that it goes into the Blood; but in what manner you may see in Page 19, how difficult he finds it to explain, and has recourse to the Salts in the Juices in the Stomach, the natural Heat of the Body, the Peristaltick Motion, &c. which, it seems, dissolve the Mercury, and so qualify it for entering into the Lacteals: This Theory, he thinks, proved by a common Experiment, because Mercury will not run in humane Spittle, which he further thinks to be occasioned by the Salts having deprived it of its Sphericity: Can he be sure his Theory is well grounded?

He has led me indeed out of my depth, but however I will venture to say, that Spittle is clammy; and put Mercury into any thing else that is so, he will, I believe, find just the same Effect. But this of its entering into the Blood was mentioned by me only, in order to introduce and to connect another part, Page 24, where he threatens most dismal Effects from its remaining in the Body, and makes the same Salts in the Juices the Executioners of his Vengeance; which as they have qualified the Particles of the Mercury to enter into the Lacteals, so these same Particles thus qualified may, in the process of circulating, attract such a Number of *Spicula* as to become at last of a corrosive Nature, and being grown too bulky to pass thro' the Capillary Vessels, may cause Obstructions; and from thence ensues a long list of Disorders and Death. To this it may easily be answered, that if Mercury surmounts all Difficulties, and gains a Passage as it is a Fluid, which will pass where no other can, it may and undoubtedly does, without any difficulty, follow the course of the Juices, and finds its Exit as they do thro' the Pores; for his Threats of its remaining, I mean when swallowed crude, we have
nothing

nothing but his fine spun Cobweb Theory ; and for its passing, daily Experience without one Exception. If a Person dies in this Regimen, or even some reasonable time after, with Mercury in him, that is no just Exception, unless it be proved that it stopped the Passages, and killed him ; for in dead Bodies, where there is no Current, even Mercury cannot circulate.

In Page 24, He supposes no Difference between the Particles of Mercury entering by the Lungs, or by the *primæ viæ*, unless in respect to the Quantity : The Difference however by his own Account must be great ; because in Page 23, he supposes what enters by the Lungs will suffocate by an Asthma, and in other places he allows, with all the rest of the Doctors, that by the *primæ viæ* it cures an Asthma, confining the Service of it to this one Complaint alone.

The different Methods of conveying crude Mercury into the Blood have various Effects ; we all know by Experience, not by Reason, that when thrown in by Uñction it always raises a Salivation, or very rarely misses, and that swallowed by the Mouth it as seldom has that Effect ; and where it has happened, it has been in extreme weak Habits. How will he account

count for this? *Belloste* has made an Attempt that way, and another pretty one upon its circulating in the Blood; but surely *Rationales* are no more than Guesses: And does Dr. *Dover*, for not amusing himself and Readers with such pastime, deserve so severe a Treatment as is given him in Page 40?

He allows that the Gentleman at *Ep-som* was cured of an Asthma, and that several others have been relieved in that Complaint; and in giving us a Theory of an Asthma, from thence supposes the Action of the Mercury to be very vigorous; and from that Supposition dreads the Consequence that might attend such an Action exerted in the very small Vessels of the Brain, &c, and then concludes that this good Effect in Asthma's is owing to Chance, which I know no one in his Senses would run, when such great Evils might possibly happen.

In answering this, it must be allowed, that where Mercury meets with Obstructions it will act vigorously, and overcome; but where it meets with none it passes peaceably, Opposition only making the Contrast: We will suppose then some Obstructions in the very small Vessels of the Brain; will not Death ensue unless they be removed? And what so proper

as Mercury for this purpose? Its vigorous Action may be there of service; if it meets no Impediment it passes thro' these Vessels easier than the other Juices; where then remains any Foundation for the Fears he would raise?

In this Quotation, partly taken from two Paragraphs at the distance of some Pages one from the other, we see the very greatest Cure that ever was performed, such as the whole History of Physick cannot match, at first lightly touched, and afterwards explained away to a meer Chance, with a terrible Caveat annexed to it for all in the like Circumstances to avoid such rashness. But even supposing this great Cure to be rightly attributed to an *Idiosyncrasis*; where is the Man under that disorder, who would not try the Chance of his being in the like Estate? As I may not have occasion to mention the Gentleman at *Epsom* any more, I here tell the Author that he is of a very thin Habit, and was Scorbutick; which are two Cases wherein I think he or some of his antiquated learned Predecessors lay such strict Injunctions against using Mercury; and that he has, as I am credibly informed, pretty closely pursued the Use of it for two Years, and still continues it.

He

He quotes several Instances of violent bad Effects from the use of *Mercury*, which being interspersed with the Accounts he gives of Salivations, makes me imagine these Mischiefs were owing to prepared Mercury, or crude conveyed into the Body by the Pores in Uñction; if so, he might have swelled his Book to a Folio with Quotations of that kind, without giving any Apprehension to the Gorgers of it, as he is pleased some where to term them: Mercury blunted by Fire may lodge, but when dissolved into a Vapour or its *minima*, will as certainly find its way out of the Body, as it found its way in, when conveyed thither by the natural Channel, and not in opposition to the Current.

He gives next an ingenious anatomical Account of the Situation of the Intestines, and of the Peristaltick Motion; and would thence, and from a Consideration of the Weight of Mercury, make such who have poured it down into their Guts to tremble: Experiment, he says, and nothing else, teaches us that a thing so slippery and heavy can pass thro' those Windings; and pray what more is necessary? The Iliac Passion is the Peristaltick Motion inverted, and has not Mercury been for many Ages the confessed Remedy?

medy; I suppose it will not be said, that its Weight only recommends it in this Case, but rather some intrinsical good Quality in it for that purpose, which no one can explain, but every one finds to be true in Fact. And as for his Apprehension of its lodging in the blind Gut, which has but one Orifice, and there contracting a corrosive Quality, and in the end bringing on a miserable Death; Providence, I dare say, has so disposed that Bag, as not to admit of any thing it ought, and cannot discharge again; otherwise the same Objection might lie against swallowing some compounded Medicines, which, if lodged in so warm a place, would, I believe, make a sad Fermentation. However, to ease his Fears, it will not be improper here to insert a Case, which may possibly be to the purpose: A certain Lady some Years ago had a pound of crude Mercury given her for the Iliac Passion at two Doses, eight Ounces each; one of the eight Ounces passed regularly, and cured her; the other Dose was lost for a long time, and did not find its way out of these dark Mazes till about six Months from the first taking it, when she found something go from her in a visiting Room, and upon rising it appeared to be the

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Mercury, which had continu'd all that time a very quiet Inhabitant, without giving her any sort of Pain. I have heard this Story well attested some time ago; and upon Reading this Treatise, in my own Mind I allotted it this same blind Gut for its so long abode; by this Instance we may see it is no Enemy within us, at least in the Bowels.

The Author, in considering the Cases wherein Dr. *Dover* recommends the use of Mercury, mentions again the Asthma, and says, that among other Causes it is sometimes owing to Polypus's and Schirrhus's, which when formed, Mercury would be hurtful to them, and endanger total Destruction.

For an Answer to this, I must refer him to the ingenious Treatise on Mercury by *Belloste*, who makes it a great Remedy for Polypus's and Schirrhus's; Success must determine who is in the right, which seems to give it for *Belloste*, sundry sorts of Asthmas having been cured or greatly eased. At Page 43, in remarking upon Mercury being recommended in a Consumption, he appeals again to Miners and Gilders to refute the Doctor's *ipse dixit*; pray why must Miners and Gilders be so often appealed to? All Miners, working under Ground and
deprived

deprived of Air in its natural State, must suffer, and their Sufferings will be more or less according to the different Damps and Steams of the Place: Many are known to be instantly fatal, and will extinguish the strongest Light; and Gilders suffer by the Fumes of Mercury over Fire; as the Body has not Heat enough to sublime it, all Examples from them are quite out of the Case.

The Doctor recommends it likewise for the Stone, using these very Words, *I have known this do Wonders*: Upon which the Author says, 'tis hard to account for it, and till he knows it passes by Urine he shall remain in suspense: Were the Doctor to reply to this, he might probably say, that he knows 'tis hard and very hard to account for Wonders; he would leave that Task to his Friends Talent at making *Rationales*, and content himself with Numbers of Facts to support his Assertion; and if nothing will convince him but Demonstration of the manner of Mercury's working these Wonders, he must live and die in suspense.

The Doctor recommends an Ounce of crude Mercury in all Complaints of the Stomach from Indigestion; whereupon Occasion is taken to prefer Pebbles to it as a Scourer, and if taken as an Absor-

bent, Crabs Eyes, it is said, will answer the Purpose much better, and with less Risque: He gives the preference to Pebbles from their Shape, but surely Mercury, by its dividing its self into numberless parts when in Motion, compensates for its Rotundity; let him try the Experiment of putting such Pebbles, and such a Number of them as are usually swallowed into a foul Bottle, and a handful of round Shot into another, and see which will be most effectually, and soonest cleansed from its Filth; and as for Powder of Crabs Eyes, it will indeed answer all the Purposes of the Apothecary much better than Mercury; The Cost to them being so small as to render the Profits of a Bill paid very great, and the Loss of a bad Debt very trifling.

He calls the Doctor to account for his Assertion, that Quicksilver never did any harm, because it always retains a globular Form; and says he has endeavoured to prove, that it doth not always retain such a Form in the Body, and that it must necessarily (that is to say, absolutely without ever one Exception) in circulating attract *Spicula*, which will sometimes prove detrimental, and therefore begs leave to say, that he thinks this
Assertion

Assertion confuted by Reason and Experience : In answer to which I must tell him, this is begging the Question ; for endeavouring to prove is not always attended with Success, nor can I believe he has proved that Quicksilver swallowed ever loses its globular Form in the Body, or that it must necessarily attract *Spicula* ; and if he will do it to satisfaction, he must tell us when, or in what part of their Passage these Globules or little Balls so armed like *Chevreaux de Frise* lose their Spikes ; for its apparently true, that it comes from the Body after having passed the Trial of the Juices in the Stomach round, and polished brighter than when first admitted ; 'till this is done the grand Assertion is not confuted : At present it stands in dispute between Authors, and when all will consent to one *Rationale* hereon, is not to be known. In Page 9, he quotes *Leuenboeck* and *Cheyne*, of opposite Opinions in this Point.

He concludes this part of his Work, with telling us that all the Doctors agree that Mercury hardly procures any visible Advantage but in Asthmas only : Have they had no Opportunity of knowing, that beat in a Mortar it has cured the most inveterate Poxes without Salivation,

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or any other Inconveniency, and the highest of all nervous Complaints, an Epilepsy. They may undoubtedly have their Reasons for this Unanimity and Harmony of Opinions: The Author however might, to my Knowledge, have excepted one, from this harmonious Consort, who is too considerable to be unknown to any of the Faculty; whose Skill and Integrity is such, as not to be deceived himself nor capable of deceiving others; whose far extended and successful Practice has given him many Occasions to admire the wonderful good Effects of crude Mercury; and whose Humanity is so conspicuous in his Attendance and Care, that whenever he has a new Patient, he is sure to make a new and a fast Friend: I could wish that every particular Gentleman of the Faculty would secretly appropriate this Character to himself; that I may thereby make a Compensation to every one separately, for the Freedoms I have thus in disguise taken with them all collectively: If this be not my good Fortune, I must fly to the customary Refuge of Anonymous Writers, and remind them that what is said to every Body is aimed at no particular, and what is said by an unknown, must be esteem'd as coming from no Body.

After

After this Digression I come to observe, that by the first quoted Case the very small Favours allowed to Mercury in Asthmatics are endeavoured to be recalled, and a very great Wonder indeed substituted in the place of an Asthma converted into another Species.

How various are the Symptoms in that Distemper? Common Observations of most Patients shew them, that different Accidents, Seasons of the Year or of Age, or sudden Alterations in the Air shall differently affect them: Had the Gentlewoman longer persisted in the Regimen, she might have found this last Complaint go after the first, or have been greatly eased in it. Mr. *More* of *Epsom*, if I am rightly informed, took it nine Weeks before he perceived any sensible Alteration; had he been timorous, which he might possibly have been, if such a Treatise had come to his Perusal, what an Happiness must he have missed, and the Publick its share in it from so remarkable an Example?

In answer to the Knight's Case, I would have it observed how natural it is to Patients to be vainly vexing themselves in GuesSES where to impute the Rise of the present Malady; and how easily

easily Minds weakned by Sickness may be brought to believe what an artful Doctor may at such times instill into them: This certain Knight may possibly have been so assisted; he must know that he was ill, but it follows not that either he or his Physician imputed it to the true Cause. Tho' I am no Doctor, in Answer to the Cases of the two Blood-Spitters and the Bloody Flux, I must act a little in their Character, and make some Guesses; may it not be suppos'd that the Causes of these Maladies lay latent previous to their taking of Mercury, and that a little time more or the same might have brought on the same fatal Effects, tho' that had been omitted? The extreme Weakness of the Vessels shew'd they were not in a State for any long Duration. Woeful Experience shews us how often the Skill of the most eminent Physicians is baffled, with the Assistance of all the *Materia Medica*; even Mercury will not render us immortal: The same eminent Doctor knows that he must at times abandon many other Patients, and himself too to Fate.

He says, a Gentleman at *Bath*, paralytic in both his Arms, found great Benefit from his Physicians Advice, and the Waters;

Waters; but it seems not so great as to think himself well; therefore he took Mercury, and relapsed; from whence he infers an evident Proof, how prejudicial it is to the Nerves.

In Answer to this it may be said, that paralytic Disorders like others (for ought I know to the contrary) may have temporary Abatements, which may have been his Case, and that had he continued the Use of Mercury, tho' at first he grew worse, he might have had a Cure; and what supports this way of reasoning, is a late remarkable Instance of a Gentleman being since cured by this Method, who was paralytic in both his Arms, and both his Legs: He did this not without the Doctor's Knowledge, but against his declared Opinion and severe Sentence. This is the Gentleman I mentioned towards the Beginning. Is it not one absolute Cure of the very Complaint which is charged upon Mercury as the Author, and where he lays his greatest Stress, sufficient to explode the Error, and more than enough to answer a thousand other suppos'd Possibilities?

The next we hear of is a Gentleman, who after the Use of Mercury, and after having left it off some time, and under

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Affliction for the Loss of a Relation, lost his Senses; and had it not been seriously imputed to Mercury, and supported by his Theory, I should have told him in Answer, that it is very possible some Body who has taken Mercury may hereafter break his Neck, with a Promise when it should happen, I would send the Case to this Publisher. Can any Man think, that by taking Mercury he secures himself from all future Evils Mankind is liable to? It seems by his Theory some Particles of the Mercury might remain lodg'd in those Parts subservient to the rational Faculties; his Theory must be very contradictory to the universally allowed Character of crude Mercury, which is the greatest Remover of Obstructions, and the easiest to pass of all Fluids. I doubt not the Fact, that the Person took crude Mercury, and that he lost his Senses. I can tell him, in Answer, other Facts as true, that hundreds have been ill of many Sorts of Distempers, and have been recover'd in the Hands of their Physicians, and have some time afterwards gone mad: Would it be fair to charge so sad a Catastrophe upon the prescrib'd Remedies in their late Illnesses? Or is it right in the present melancholy Instance to raise such Terrors in his

his Aid? Shall a bare Possibility of being choaked banish Pills from Use, or keep us to Liquids only for Nourishment? And shall a bare Possibility of imagin'd Evils, thro' Impotency of Spirit, deprive us of that *Manus Dei* kindly extended to our Relief?

The next is the Case of two Mercury-Takers dying of Apoplexies; the Virtue of Mercury stands confessed in having cur'd the Gentleman in *Essex* of an Asthma; that it occasion'd the Apoplexy is very hard to say.

How very tedious is it to follow thro' all these Cases that Point only one Way? viz. that whatever Distemper any one of these rash Gorgers dies of, must be imputed to Mercury. One general Answer should suffice for all, where nothing very particular occurs; as for Instance, some Body near *Stocks-Market* took Mercury, and died of an Apoplexy: Answer, some body took Mercury, and was afterwards for some Crime hang'd. It will conclude in both Cases alike; the Mercury was innocent of their Deaths.

Mercury gains Honour again in the Case of the Gentleman in *Tooly-Street*; how happy would the Author be if every one were as timorous as this unthankful

Patient? His Legs broke out, and he was terrify'd: And I dare say, as his Doctor and Apothecary have got him by the Legs, they will take effectual care that he shall never more ramble from them.

The last is a Gentleman of *Cook's-Court*, who took Mercury for an Asthma, and died after of a violent Fever, which his Friends, and among them doubtless his Doctor and Apothecary, unanimously impute to this Practice: Suppose this Gentleman had miserably perish'd in the Flames of a burning House, it might more justly have been charg'd to his imprudent Practice than the fatal Fever; for had he not taken that Remedy, in all Probability, unable to have got up Stairs, he might have been sitting in a great Chair, in a Ground Room, and from that Situation have been easily removed; whereas by imprudently taking Mercury, he was, up two Pair of Stairs, stretch'd out in Bed, fast sleeping, and there for want of timely Notice met his Fate.

Having gone thro' the Cases, I will give the Author a Hint how in his next Treatise he may more expeditiously execute his Design against Mercury; let him deal with the Company of Parish Clerks, and prevail upon them to leave out of
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their Bills of Mortality the Article of Convulsions which runs very high, and often includes another Distemper vulgarly call'd the Doctor, and substitute in its place Quicksilver. To attain this Point, he needs only gain an Intimacy with People of one stage higher in Life than those with whom he acknowledges to have one, in *Page 40.* (The Nurses and Grave-Diggers); for there he affirms to have gain'd some material Knowledge, and its being the only Place where he uses an Affirmation, it is but natural to suppose that those People themselves told him their Minds.

To conclude a little more seriously, let it be consider'd how unfair a Proceeding it is to quote old Authors Opinions of what they so little practiced, and who in many other Instances are by the present learned and more experienced Age disavow'd; to draw Conclusions from disputed Premises, and right or wrong impute in all Cases the unavoidable Fate of all such who take Mercury to that Regimen: In a few Years to what an enormous Number must such Cases amount? Imagine ten thousand People daily taking it; of them how many may reasonably be suppos'd to be in Cases really incurable? How many upon the very Point of Death,
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the Conclusion of some old lingering Diseases? as one who took it for an Asthma, and died very soon. The Case was the Person's short breathing was owing to a Collection of Water in the Breast; which being just then fill'd, Death would as certainly have happen'd at the same time without the Mercury; which no more was the Occasion of it, than any thing else that was given a Year before. How many again are taking it improperly, while guided by their own Fancies and Hopes only, for want of their Doctor's Assistance, who obstinately persist in decrying it: The World, which is but too censorious, will impute this their Proceeding to Purposes they will not care to own. Let them therefore take it into Practice, and when it is there guided by their Skill and Judgement, from proper Experiments made with due Remarks, what an inconceivable Benefit may be render'd to mankind? And how much more extensive than in its present Situation under a Contest and weighty Opposition; if that once ceases, the natural Fears of Mankind will send them fast enough to their Physicians; for who that is able will enter into such a Regimen without the best Advice, where it is to be had;

had ; but where it is deny'd, Reason must
and will act in the Place of the Doctor ;
and make unhappy Chronicks find by Ex-
perience among themselves in their va-
rious Cases, that all the good Qualities
of Mercury are not yet sufficiently disco-
ver'd.

F I N I S.



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